

Introduction

This Comprehensive Plan for Shawnee Township is the result of the foresight of the Township Trustees, and of the Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission, to bring comprehensive planning to the Township level in Allen County, Ohio. The Plan is intended to offer a picture of the Township as it exists today, to document what is felt to be a desired future for the Township, some twenty years from now, and to propose a series of goals and recommendations to help achieve that desired future.

There are many elements and systems within a local jurisdiction that interconnect to accommodate and produce growth and development. Each chapter of the Plan is intended to introduce one of these key elements, to discuss its status today, and to recommend methods by which that element can be guided or directed toward that desirable future. The final, tenth chapter, presents a summary of the numerous recommendations made throughout the document.

A comprehensive plan should be viewed as an evolving document, and it is highly recommended that a formally appointed committee review the Plan in three or four years, to note progress in meeting goals and objectives, and in some cases, to acknowledge those recommendations that have, in a changing world, become obsolete and no longer pursued.

This document represents a Township that is aware and protective of its assets, wishing to further develop while maintaining the standards of a quality living environment for all. The Township is comprised of a rich diversity of land uses, from the heavy industry in the farthest northeast region, to the numerous residential subdivisions often abutting one another along the Township's arterial roadways, to the commercial and service center growing along Shawnee Road, and finally to the low-density, agricultural crop fields and farmsteads along the western and southern reaches of the Township. The challenge for the Township is to maintain this balance and diversity, sustaining its agricultural base while providing for growth and change in the residential sector. This challenge is described and discussed in detail within the Plan.

The Planning Process

The Shawnee Township Trustees procured planning services from the Community Development Department of WSOS Community Action Commission, of Fremont, Ohio. To assist in guiding the planning process, a Steering Committee was appointed by the Trustees, to represent the variety of perspectives and viewpoints within the Township.

WSOS staff led a series of Steering Committee meetings over the course of 2008 and early 2009. Those meetings included sessions on identifying local assets and analyzing township strengths and weaknesses. One session was devoted to goal setting, which resulted in the Committee authoring a series of over-arching goals, to which WSOS staff added more specific objectives. Later sessions were devoted to reviewing individual draft chapters of the Plan as they were developed.

Input for the plan was also gained through a series of interviews with officials from Township, County, and school system offices and departments. A public meeting was also held early in the process, to gather input from interested community members on their perspective on Township strengths, weaknesses, issues, and their hopes for the future of the Township. Public input was also solicited at the end of the planning process, as the document was presented to the Township Planning Commission for their review and approval.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of a number of offices and individuals who assisted greatly in the planning process. First, the Board of Township Trustees (Russell Holly, Christi Brown, and Christie Seddlemeyer) has been most accommodating and engaged in the planning process, attending meetings of the Steering Committee and offering their input. Also very helpful have been former Zoning Inspector Richard Morrissey and his successor, John Gosnell.

The Steering Committee has given up a large number of Wednesday evenings over the past year to help guide the plan and have it reflect the realities of the Township as they see it. The author would thus like to acknowledge the membership of that Committee: Joe Bianco, Deb Drexler, Roy Gillespie, Keaton Lehman, Paul Logsdon, Kevin Mayer, Jerome Moenter, Paul Nardini, Ottis Newland, Roger Rhodes, Greg Stover, and Doug Bodey.

Finally, the Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission, its Director, Thomas Mazur, and Planner Jim Greer have been extremely helpful throughout the process, supplying maps, data, projections, and other material.